water, and when perfectly dry. In one case it may be almost abraded with the naked finger, and the nail will readily make an indent on the surface; whereas the very same piece of stone, when completely dried, is comparatively so indurated, that it cannot be effaced without a sharp instrument, or some more violent effort. Independent of the gradual decomposition produced by the solvent power of water, a stone so absorbent and so softened by moisture, as it must frequently be, in a climate where wind and rain continue for days and weeks without ceasing,—such stone must be liable to be damaged by mechanical violence in a thousand ways that would have no effect upon a harder material.

Much stress is generally laid upon Caen stone being "well seasoned:" although this caution is important to a certain extent, it is usually overrated. All kinds of stone while in the rock, or when recently quarried, are more thoroughly saturated with moisture than can ever be accomplished after they have been once allowed to get dry. If the stone be remarkably soft, it is advisable not to let it dry too fast, after it has been taken from the quarry, for fear of its cracking, in consequence of the moisture being removed from the outside before that in the interior of the block can have had time to evaporate; hence, while the central part remains of its original size, and extremely damp, the surface will dry and shrink, thereby causing many unobserved cracks, the effect of which will be evident in the following winter. The Caen stone merchants take no other care of the blocks after they are exposed for sale, or shipment, on the quay, than to cover them with matting during frosty weather. In addition to this, I would recommend placing them under an open shed, where they might have a free current of air, protection from rain, and be shaded from the sun, which might otherwise cause them to dry too rapidly on the surface.

The cost of Caen stone buildings, compared with works constructed of materials produced in this country, will, in a great degree, depend upon locality and other circumstances. At this time, Caen stone may be delivered on a wharf in London for about two-thirds the price of Portland; and, for labour alone, the expense is certainly not more than half that upon Portland stone, or of that which is now being used at the New Houses of Parliament. Although elaborate architectural works may be constructed in that beautiful material, for a comparatively small sum, I wish it to be clearly understood that the material now generally known in the markets as Caen stone differs, in many essential particulars, from the stone which forms the exterior of the venerable edifices which have adorned the city of Caen from the period of William the Conqueror until this time. Therefore it is too much to expect that the palace of our Sovereign, the mansions of the wealthy, and the palatial looking club-houses, which have recently been constructed with Caen stone in the metropolis of England, should endure for seven or eight centuries, with as little appearance of decay as is at this time observable on the sacred structures in the vicinity of the quarries. However, if good judgment be exercised in selection, it is probable that the buildings now erecting with Caen stone in this country may continue in a fair state of preservation for at least one or two centuries.

In all cases, before commencing a work of magnitude or importance, I strongly recommend a visit to the quarries, and an attentive examination of old buildings in the vicinity, and, if possible, an interview with the proprietor or principal quarryman.

Before I describe and comment upon the tables and experiments,* I will briefly say a few words on the mode of investigating or searching after these unknown truths.

To examine the granular aggregation of a stone, with a view to its fitness for exposure to the sun, air, moisture, &c., it should be washed thoroughly clean, to get rid of all dust or foreign matter from the surface; and observations should particularly be made on surfaces as large as possible, for they will present more palpable and more numerous distinguishing characteristics than minute ones. All experiments made with little bits of stone, however accurately they may be watched, are but vague approximations, the best of which are likely to lead to erroneous results, owing to the variable nature of the stones upon which the experiments are performed. For example, if you observe the party-coloured appearance of some stones, and the tint of one entire slab compared with another, each slab representing a vertical section of one block of Caen stone, you will perceive by the colour, when half dry, the different qualities of hard and soft stone, each of which will, no doubt, vary considerably in duration. C. H. SMITH.

* To be given next week.

ENFRANCHISEMENT OF LEASEHOLDS.

THE articles on this subject published in THE BUILDER, appear to have attracted considerable attention, and perhaps some remarks as to the utopian objects of the promulgator. The lords of wide urban domains, whose interests (or at least the interests of whose sons, grandsons, or successors in tail) are the subject of revision and change, may cry aloud, "The plan is one of spoliation—it is a socialist doctrine, designed to enrich the many, by confiscating the estates of the few;" whilst a great portion of the community, fearful of approaching any theory which hath the savour of an invasion on property, perhaps recoil from a measure that seems to have that tendency.

But in truth nothing can be more illusory than the prejudice of either party in the present consideration; for its prominent characteristic is, that the enfranchisement of leasehold tenures, carried out on an equitable basis, cannot injure nor reduce the rentals of great proprietors; nor can it fail to benefit society at large by the creation of an extensive class of freeholders in houses, and at the same time put a stop to that concentration of fixed capital in oligarchic families, which prejudices the freedom of the electoral voice, harasses the relations of the civic family of mankind, bereaves the heirs of local residents of their houses and stations, and hath for its inevitable issue, the building up of auriferous principalities in the heart of England.

It is far from our design to interfere with or reduce the *head* rents reserved in original leases; or to abate from the independence of families possessing *thousands of houses*; but as in every question of national policy, the scruples of the few must cede to the manifest welfare of the many,—so perhaps in this scheme, the abstract notions of vested interests of the oligarchy of wealth, must ultimately be made to have some regard to the common weal.

The feu rights of lords of manors to copyhold levies of fines, heriots, &c. &c., were equally legitimate privileges, before the legislature thought fit to abrogate these seigniorial dues; the rights of freeholders in the tenure of freehold lands, were as indefeasible, until the national Parliament enacted that in all cases where a line of railway should intersect private property, individual benefit should give way to that of the public, and that such sections of property as fell into the plan of the proposed lines should be valued by sworn juries; and that the amount adjudged as the value thereof should be paid to the possessors on the transfer of such properties to the public company for such purposes.

In framing this Act of Parliament, however, a very discreet reservation was carefully guarded, on behalf of the proprietors of parks (the legislators themselves being ordinarily the tenors), that no park, lawn, &c. &c., should be understood as coming under the provisions of the Act! This was a salvo for the wealthy,—for the veto lay with *them* in all cases of converting private domain lands; and wherever such have been needed to carry out the plans of a railroad company, the most extortionate prices have been exacted and paid to propitiate the repugnance of the resident lord,—in many cases amounts equal to twenty times the fee simple value of the segment appropriated! Here the farmer, the modest yeoman, or town burgess, have to submit to the statutory enactment, whilst the magnate of the park could only be brought out at *his own valuation*.

These are but examples to prove the acknowledgment of the Legislature that private right must cede to public utility and convenience, the right being duly compensated for.

In the matter of enfranchising leasehold tenures, the whole resident community is deeply concerned. If in the metropolis there are 300,000 houses and householders, we may safely infer that 100,000 must be deeply interested in any measure which would tend to the assurance of perpetuity in their abodes—in the houses of their sires and progenitors—in the security that the habitation (in which, in many instances, the independence of their condition has been amassed, and upon which large sums have been disbursed) shall not be forfeited, but transmitted to their children. On the other hand, these 100,000 houses belong to comparatively but few in number of the renter class. Several of the leviathan lords are lessors and proprietors of above *one thousand houses!* and some of five times that number; and the longest lease known on such estates is *ninety-nine*,—but latterly *seventy* and *sixty-one* years have become the usual term on building estates. One estate in the most valuable part of the town has above 2,000 first and second-class houses, 2,000 third-class, and building sites for as many more. One-half of this estate is of new creation, and has seventy years to run, at ground rents averaging two guineas a foot, or 50*l.* a house! On every house of this city of palaces at least 1,000*l.* has been expended by the adventuring builder; so that, on the lapse of seventy years, supposing that no greater sums are disbursed in embellishments or improvements, the startling sum (in fixed property) of 5,000,000*l.* will fall into the hands and disposition of one sole potentate in rents! and this to the exclusion of the short-sighted outlayers of private capital. But this is not half,—turn we to the other moiety of the estate;—of the other 2,000 houses. One-third part were leased ninety years back, one-third sixty, and one-third twenty, at the ground-rents incident to the value of these periods. For the lapsed portion, that is relet at rack rents (generally giving the preference on lease to the lessee or occupier), therefore one-third part has sixty years to run, and the last third portion has thirty years to run.

These statements are in general terms, but not far from the truth. Now for the tenants' interest on these holdings. The rule on this estate is, that no lease shall be renewed until within twenty years of its lapse or expiration. At this period the valuation is made, not by the tenant, nor by a valuation jury, but by the landlord: he estimates the value to the tenant, and lays it on accordingly. The original rent in first-rate tenements may average 50*l.* a-year, the improved rental on a renewed lease, from 250*l.* to 300*l.* a-year. The more money the predecessor or ancestor of the lessee has laid out on the premises, the greater will be the value thereof; and, therefore, the tenant, whose father or grandsire has converted a shop into a mansion, or a mansion into a palace, has to pay over again the improved value, if he wish to retain his ancestral dome.

It is thus, that in the lapse of sixty years, the whole extent of this great town and its suburbs will be divided amongst a few, and remain to be dealt with at their discretion; and of these the westward division will present the paramount feudalisms of Grosvenor and Belgrave, Portland, Portman, Bedford, Fitz-Hardinge, Southampton, Northampton, Arundel, or Norfolk, Sutton, and some other hospodars, pachalics, and principalities; so that the second generation issuing from the present and existent one, inhabiting one half of the metropolis, will be under the proprietory dominion of some dozen Archons or Crœsuses, who, knit together by a community of feelings and interests, must form a fearful *imperium in regno*,—as dangerous to state policy as to civil polity.

To simplify the proposition which, although perhaps novel, has nothing of spoliation, violence, or injustice in it, the following development will sufficiently suffice.

Suppose a tenant of a building plot, 30 feet frontage, in any new locality, held on lease of 80 years at a ground-rent of 20*s.* a foot, or 30*l.* a year;—if disposed to purchase the perpetuity before he builds, let him serve notices to that effect on the landlord or his agent, and on the surveyor of the district. Within one month after the service of such notice

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